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The White House says nothing classified was shared on Signal. Democrats say that strains credulity

By AAMER MADHANI, STEPHEN GROVES, and DAVID KLEPPER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration struggled Wednesday to stem the fallout from revelations that top national security officials discussed sensitive attack plans over a messaging app and mistakenly added a journalist to the chain.

The White House said the information shared through the publicly available Signal app with Jeffrey Goldberg, editor-in-chief of The Atlantic magazine, was not classified, an assertion that Democrats said strains credulity considering that it detailed plans for an upcoming attack on Yemen's Houthis.

The decision on determining whether the information is classified ultimately lies with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who in the chain listed weapons systems and a timeline for the attack "THIS IS WHEN THE FIRST BOMBS WILL DEFINITELY DROP," he wrote. The Houthis have been wreaking havoc on vital Red Sea shipping lanes since November 2023 as the Israel-Hamas war raged.

Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said the position that the Trump administration is staking out can be described with one word: "Baloney."

"When you describe time, place, type of armaments used: Do they think the American public is stupid?" Warner said in an exchange with reporters.

There are no signs that the controversy will fade soon for President Donald Trump, who has said he stands by his national security team and has assailed the reporter's credibility.

At the same time, he has made clear his preference for his team to discuss such operations in person and in more secure settings, though it is not yet clear if changes will be implemented as a result.

Sen. Roger Wicker, the Republican chair of the Sen-



Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth prepares to give a television interview outside the White House, Friday, March 21, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

ate Armed Services Committee, said he and Sen. Jack Reed, the committee's top Democrat, will send a letter to the Trump administration requesting an expedited inspector general investigation into the use of Signal.

They are also calling for a classified briefing with a top administration official "who actually has the facts and can speak on behalf of the administration."

"The information, as published recently, appears to me to be of such a sensitive nature that, based on my knowledge, I would have wanted it classified," Wicker said.

But White House officials continue to insist no classified material was discussed in the March 13 to March 15 Signal chain and have launched scathing attacks on Goldberg. The Atlantic on Wednesday published the full content of the text exchange.

Hegseth, White House national security adviser Mike Waltz and other administration officials on Wednesday uniformly insisted that no "war plans" had been texted on Signal, a claim that current and former U.S. of-

ficials have called "semantics."

War plans carry a specific meaning. They often refer to the numbered and highly classified planning documents sometimes thousands of pages long that would inform U.S. decisions in case of a major conflict, such as if the United States is called to defend Taiwan. But the information Hegseth did post specific attack details selecting human and weapons storage targets was a subset of those plans and was likely informed by the same classified intelligence.

Hegseth in an X posting said the message chain included, "No names. No targets. No locations. No units. No routes. No sources. No methods. And no classified information." He did not directly address Democrats' concerns about the timing and weaponry details in the chain.

"This only proves one thing: Jeff Goldberg has never seen a war plan or an 'attack plan' (as he now calls it). Not even close," Hegseth, who is traveling to the Indo-Pacific this week, added.

Waltz, who has acknowl-

cation or advanced warning that the U.S. or its allies are preparing an attack."

But Gabbard said the decision on whether the Signal chain should be classified lay with Hegseth. Asked by Himes if she believed the Pentagon's classification guidance was materially different from her office's, she demurred.

"I haven't reviewed the DOD guidance, so I can't comment," Gabbard said referring to the Department of Defense.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio acknowledged that having a journalist in a Signal group chat with the most senior Trump officials was a "big mistake." But he said he has been assured that the information shared did not threaten the operation or the lives of the service members.

Press secretary Karoline Leavitt, during her White House press briefing, described the messaging thread "as a policy discussion, surely a sensitive policy discussion, amongst high-level Cabinet officials and senior staff."

Peppered with questions about how the administration can conclude classified information wasn't shared considering launch times and weapon systems were discussed in the chain, Leavitt said it was up to the public to decide whose opinion they trusted.

"Do you trust the secretary of defense who was nominated for this role, voted by the United States Senate into this role, who has served in combat, honorably served our nation in uniform or do you trust Jeffrey Goldberg?" she asked.

Leavitt is one of three Trump administration officials who face a lawsuit from The Associated Press on First and Fifth Amendment grounds. The AP says the three are punishing the news agency for editorial decisions they oppose.

The White House says the AP is not following an executive order to refer to the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America. □

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U.S. could run short of money to pay its bills by August without a debt limit deal, CBO says

By FATIMA HUSSEIN and KEVIN FREKING

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States is on track to hit its statutory debt ceiling — the so-called X-date when the country runs short of money to pay its bills as early as August without a deal between lawmakers and the White House, according to a Congressional Budget Office report Wednesday.

By that time, the government would no longer have enough of a financial cushion to pay all its bills after exhausting its "extraordinary measures" the accounting maneuvers used to stretch existing funds.

Washington would risk defaulting on its debt unless Congress and Republican President Donald Trump agree to lift the borrowing limit or abolish the debt ceiling concept altogether. The debt limit was reinstated Jan. 2, following its sus-



Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent walks to speak with reporters at the White House, Thursday, March 13, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

pension by Congress in the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023.

"The Treasury has already reached the current debt limit of \$36.1 trillion, so it has

no room to borrow under its standard operating procedures," according to the CBO report.

An analysis released on Monday by the Bipartisan

Policy Center estimates that the U.S. could run out of cash by mid-July if Congress did not raise or suspend the nation's debt limit.

Trump had previously demanded that a provision raising or suspending the debt limit something that his own party routinely resists be included in legislation to avert the last potential government shutdown. "Anything else is a betrayal of our country," Trump said in a statement in December. That deal did not address the debt limit.

Experts say an extended default period could result in the loss of millions of jobs and an economic. Government payments to millions of families probably would go unpaid, including to Social Security beneficiaries, veterans and military families. There could be disruptions to operations such as air traffic control and food safety.

Given these consequences, Congress and presidents have always found a way, even at the last minute, to avoid a default. □

Vermont child welfare agency seeks to dismiss lawsuit alleging it tracked pregnant women

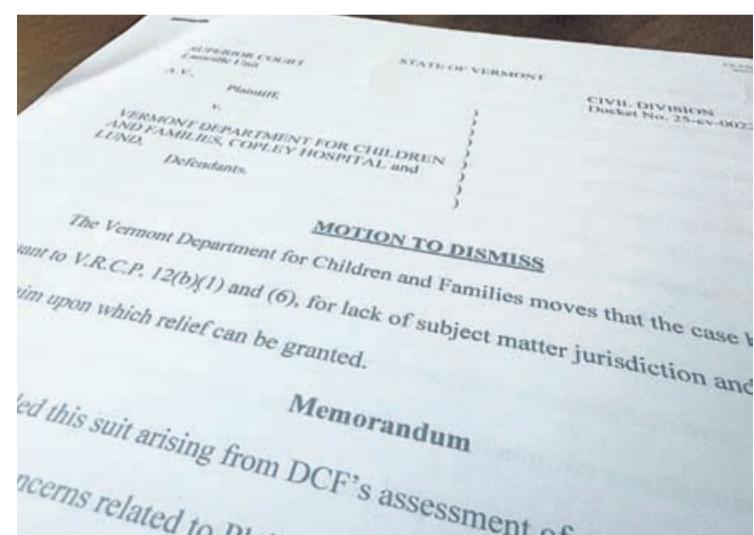
By HOLLY RAMER
Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Vermont's child welfare agency has asked a judge to dismiss a lawsuit alleging the state routinely targets and tracks pregnant women deemed unsuitable for motherhood.

The Department for Children and Families filed the request Monday, two months after it was sued by a woman who claims the state secretly investigated her when she was pregnant and won custody of her daughter before the baby was born. The lawsuit, filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont and the Pregnancy Justice advocacy group, seeks both an end to what it calls an illegal surveillance program and unspecified monetary damages for the woman, who is identified only by her initials, A.V.

According to the complaint, the director of a homeless shelter where A.V. briefly stayed in January 2022 told the child welfare agency that she appeared to have untreated paranoia, dissociative behaviors and post-traumatic stress disorder. The state opened an investigation and later spoke to the woman's counselor, midwife and hospital social worker. The suit alleges the state received updates from the hospital and won temporary custody of the fetus while she was in labor and then immediately took the baby away when she was born.

According to the lawsuit, the state had no jurisdiction before the baby was born, an argument the state rebuts in its filing. □



This March 26, 2025, photo shows the Vermont Department for Children and Family's motion to dismiss a lawsuit that alleges that the state routinely targets and tracks pregnant women deemed unsuitable for parenthood.

Associated Press

A beloved library that united the U.S. and Canada faces new border restrictions

By AMANDA SWINHART and PATRICK WHITTLE
Associated Press

DERBY, Vt. (AP) — For Allyson Howell, her hometown library is more than just a place to borrow a book; it's also a unique space where different cultures from the U.S. and Canada have mingled and developed ties for more than a century.

Howell and others fear that could change under a new regulation implemented by President Donald Trump's administration as tensions continue to rise between the two countries.

The Haskell Free Library and Opera House straddles the line between Howell's town of Derby Line, Vermont, and Stanstead, Quebec. The entrance to the imposing Victorian-style brick and stone building is on the U.S. side, but an informal agreement between the two countries has always allowed Canadians to enter without a passport.

Canadians cross the border on a sidewalk leading directly to the library that is



Penny Thomas who drove from Newport, Vt., has a tear roll down her cheek as she holds a sign on the standing in Derby, Vt., outside the Haskell Free Library and Opera House in Stanstead, Que., on Friday, March 21, 2025.

Associated Press

monitored by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The nearest border checkpoint is not within eyesight of the building. Inside the library, there is a line on the floor marking the international

border, though residents of both countries have been able to move freely among the stacks.

But since Tuesday, the only Canadian visitors able to enter on the U.S. side have

been cardholders and library workers. All others have had to use an emergency exit on the Canadian side. Starting Oct. 1, all Canadians will have to enter from their side of the

border or pass through a security checkpoint on the U.S. side. It's a big change from the honor system arrangement the two countries have always used, users of the library said.

"This feels like this one more step of building this chasm between these two nations that is really devoid of curiosity and understanding," said Howell, who described the library as "really special" and a "real symbol" of international cooperation between two long-standing allies.

Derby Line is a village of about 700 people within the town of Derby, located in the rural Northeast Kingdom section of Vermont. Stanstead is a town of about 3,000 residents.

Like many rural border communities in the U.S. and Canada, their economies and cultures are linked. But the ties have become strained under Trump, who has advanced tariffs and tightened border protections in some communities that are especially reliant on each other. □

Mexican drug lord charged with killing DEA agent could face death penalty

By PHILIP MARCELO
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal prosecutors are considering seeking the death penalty against Mexican drug lord Rafael Caro Quintero in a sprawling case that includes the 1985 killing of an agent of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Saritha Komatireddy confirmed that capital punishment remains on the table as a possibility when pressed by a judge hearing the case in Brooklyn federal court Wednesday.

The top court Caro Quintero faces leading a continuing criminal enterprise carries a mandatory minimum sentence of life imprisonment, with the possibility of the death penalty, prosecutors have said.

"A determination has not

been made but it is going through the process," Komatireddy said as dozens of DEA agents packed the courtroom.

Judge Frederic Block, in response, tapped a lawyer with experience in federal death penalty cases to serve as special counsel to

Caro Quintero. Elizabeth Macedonio appeared alongside the 72-year-old former drug kingpin in court Wednesday.

She previously represented the late Vincent Asaro, the New York mobster acquitted in the notorious 1978

Lufthansa Airlines heist at John F. Kennedy Airport that was dramatized in Martin Scorsese's "Goodfellas."

Block also said he would weigh whether it's appropriate for Caro Quintero to continue receiving court-appointed, taxpayer-funded legal representation as his family has not hired their own lawyer.

He asked representatives for Caro Quintero to complete financial disclosure forms and for prosecutors to help the court review them. Block set the next court date for June 25.

Caro Quintero, who has pleaded not guilty to a range of drug-related charges, didn't speak in court and his lawyers didn't immediately respond to emails seeking comment. He appeared alongside his

codefendant, Ismael Quintero Arellanes, his nephew and former top lieutenant. Linda George, Quintero Arellanes' lawyer, told the judge her client continues to discuss a possible plea deal in his case, which involves his role relaying messages and orders between Caro Quintero and members of the drug operation as well as helping him avoid capture as his personal bodyguard and head of security.

Quintero Arellanes, who was known as "Fierro," is also due back in court June 25.

Caro Quintero was among 29 imprisoned cartel figures expelled from Mexico by the country's government in a bid to stave off the Trump administration's planned tariffs on Mexican imports. □

FBI TEN MOST WANTED FUGITIVE

VIOLENT CRIMES IN AID OF RACKETEERING; CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT VIOLENT CRIMES IN AID OF RACKETEERING; CONSPIRACY TO KIDNAP A FEDERAL AGENT; KIDNAPPING OF A FEDERAL AGENT; FELONY MURDER OF A FEDERAL AGENT; AIDING AND ABETTING; ACCESSORY AFTER THE FACT

RAFAEL CARO-QUINTERO



In this image released by the FBI shows the wanted poster for Rafael Caro-Quintero.

Associated Press

Russia and Ukraine accuse each other of breaking ceasefire terms protecting energy sites

By ILLIA NOVIKOV and HANNA ARHIROVA

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia and Ukraine have accused each other of breaking the terms of a tentative U.S.-brokered deal to pause strikes on energy infrastructure, underscoring the challenges to negotiating a broader peace in the war in Ukraine.

Russia's Defense Ministry alleged that Ukrainian drone attacks hit an electric facility in the Bryansk region early Wednesday and a power grid facility in the Kursk region on Tuesday, leading to a power cut affecting thousands of people.

"The Kyiv regime is doing everything to derail the Russian-U.S. agreements on the gradual settlement of the Ukrainian conflict," the ministry said Wednesday.

Ukraine's General Staff denied the allegations, saying in a statement Wednesday that Russia's claims were part of a broader disinformation campaign aimed at justifying continued hostilities.

The accusations came hours after Washington announced Tuesday that it had reached a tentative agreement with Ukraine and Russia to implement a pause on attacks on en-



A worker of DTEK company walks in front of transformers of a substation destroyed by a Russian drone strike in undisclosed location, Ukraine, March 25, 2025.

Associated Press

ergy sites as well as taking steps to ensure safe navigation for ships in the Black Sea. The deal followed three days of separate U.S.-Ukrainian and U.S.-Russian talks in the Saudi capital. Those talks were part of efforts by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump to implement a limited, 30-day ceasefire that Moscow and Kyiv agreed to in principle last week. That has thus far failed to materialize as both sides

continue to launch drone and rocket attacks. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday Ukraine had agreed with U.S. negotiators in Riyadh "that a ceasefire for energy infrastructure can start today," and expressed his country's willingness to comply with the agreement while warning Russia would face "strong retaliation" if it attacked Ukrainian energy facilities. Ukrainian officials have

contested claims by the Kremlin that Russian forces have not attacked energy sites in Ukraine since March 18. In a post on X on Tuesday, Zelenskyy's communications adviser Dmytro Lytvyn said Moscow was "lying" about observing a ceasefire on energy infrastructure.

"They've been hitting our energy sites with bombs, attack drones, and FPV drones. We're not going into all the details, but there

have already been eight confirmed hits on energy facilities," Lytvyn wrote.

"Every night our air defense forces shoot down nearly a hundred attack drones — and many of those drones were likely targeting other energy facilities."

Russia links the Black Sea deal to sanctions relief

On Tuesday, the White House said in separate statements that the sides had "agreed to ensure safe navigation, eliminate the use of force, and prevent the use of commercial vessels for military purposes in the Black Sea."

Details of the prospective deal were not released, but it appeared to mark another attempt to ensure safe Black Sea shipping after a 2022 agreement that was brokered by the U.N. and Turkey but halted by Russia the next year.

After the White House issued its statement Tuesday, the Kremlin warned that a potential Black Sea deal could only be implemented after sanctions against the Russian Agricultural Bank and other financial organizations involved in food and fertilizer trade are lifted and their access to the SWIFT system of international payments is ensured. □

4 American soldiers who went missing in Lithuania have died, NATO leader says

By VANESSA GERA

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said Wednesday that four U.S. soldiers who went missing while training in Lithuania have died, but that he did not yet know the details.

A U.S. official would say only that the four soldiers were involved in a training accident. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, would not comment on the status of the soldiers.

Rutte said during a trip to Warsaw that he had received word of the deaths of the four soldiers and that his thoughts were with their families and with the United States.

"This is still early news so we do not know the details. This is really terrible news and our thoughts are with the families and loved ones," Rutte told reporters in Warsaw. A statement from U.S. Army Europe and Af-

rica public affairs in Wiesbaden, Germany said the soldiers were conducting scheduled tactical training at the time.

Lithuanian public broadcaster LRT reported that four U.S. soldiers and vehicle were reported missing Tuesday afternoon during an exercise at the General Silvestras Žukauskas training ground in Pabradė, a town located less than 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the border with Belarus.

The Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are all NATO members and have often had chilly ties with Russia, a key ally of Belarus, since declaring independence from the Soviet Union in 1990. Relations soured further over Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda has been one of the most outspoken supporters of Ukraine in its fight against Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces. □



Eurocopters Tiger of the German Army take part in the Lithuanian-German division-level international military exercise 'Grand Quadriga 2024' at a training range in Pabrade, north of the capital Vilnius, Lithuania on May 29, 2024.

Associated Press

Brazil Supreme Court panel orders ex-President Bolsonaro to stand trial over alleged coup plan

By ELÉONORE HUGHES

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — A panel of Brazil Supreme Court justices on Wednesday unanimously accepted charges against former President Jair Bolsonaro over an alleged attempt to stay in office after his 2022 election defeat, and ordered him to stand trial.

Prosecutor-General Paulo Gonet has accused Bolsonaro and 33 others of attempting a coup that included a plan to poison his successor, current President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and kill a Supreme Court judge.

The justices said seven close allies should also stand trial on five counts: attempting to stage a coup, involvement in an armed criminal organization, attempted violent abolition of the democratic rule of law, damage characterized by violence and a serious threat against the state's assets, and deterioration of listed heritage.

The former president has repeatedly denied wrongdoing and says he's being politically persecuted. A lawyer for Bolsonaro did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"It seems that there is some-



Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro speaks to the press at Congress in Brasilia, Brazil, Wednesday, March 26, 2025, after panel of Brazil Supreme Court justices accepted charges against him over an alleged attempt to stay in office after his 2022 election defeat.

Associated Press

thing personal against me," Bolsonaro told journalists after the panel's decision. "The accusations are unfounded."

Under Brazilian law, a coup conviction carries a sentence of up to 12 years. When combined with the other charges, it could result in a sentence of decades behind bars.

"Coups kill," Justice Flávio Dino said when casting his

vote. "It doesn't matter if it happens today, the following month or a few years later."

Gonet on Tuesday said those facing the charges sought to keep Bolsonaro in power "at all costs," in a multi-step scheme that accelerated after the far-right politician lost to the current president.

As in his February indictment, Gonet said part of

the plot included a plan to kill Lula and Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who were put under surveillance by the alleged conspirators. The plan did not go ahead at the last minute because the accused failed to get the army's commander on board, Gonet said.

"Frustration overwhelmed the members of the criminal organization who, however, did not give up on the

violent seizure of power, not even after the elected president of the republic was sworn in," he said.

That was a reference to the Jan. 8, 2023, riot when Bolsonaro supporters stormed the Supreme Court, presidential palace and Congress in Brasilia a week after Lula took office.

De Moraes on Wednesday showed the panel a video with scenes from that day. "We had a very violent coup attempt," he said. "A savage violence, in total incivility, with the request for military intervention in the coup d'état."

Bolsonaro's running mate during the 2022 election and former Defense Minister Walter Braga Netto, ex-Justice Minister Anderson Torres and his aide-de-camp Mauro Cid, among others, will also stand trial. The court will decide on the others' fate later.

Bolsonaro, a former military officer who was known to express nostalgia for the country's past dictatorship, openly defied Brazil's judicial system during his 2019-2022 term in office.

He has sought to shore up political support before the possible trial, including with a protest in Rio de Janeiro earlier this month. □

South Korea's centuries-old Gounsa temple is left in ruins by unprecedented wildfires

By HYUNG-JIN KIM

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) —

Unprecedented wildfires ripping through South Korea's southern regions have

destroyed large parts of an ancient Buddhist temple complex, burning down two buildings that had been designated national treasures.



A bell is seen broken at the remains of the bell pavilion due to wildfires at Gounsa Temple in Uiseong, South Korea, Wednesday, March 26, 2025.

Associated Press

Five days of wildfires, considered among South Korea's worst, have left 24 people dead, destroyed more than 300 structures and forced more than 28,000 residents to evacuate, officials said Wednesday.

The Gounsa temple was reportedly originally built in 681 A.D. during the Shilla dynasty that ruled more than half of the Korean Peninsula. It is nestled at the foot of Deungun Mountain in the southeastern town of Uiseong. While it doesn't house buildings constructed during that ancient period, it is home to several famous cultural heritages built later.

The temple was engulfed in flames on Tuesday as strong winds fanned the wildfires. About 20 of its 30 buildings and structures were completely burned down, including the revered Gaunru, a pavilion-shaped structure built in 1668 overlooking a stream, and Yeonsujeon, built in 1904 to mark the longevity of a king, according to the state-run Korea Heritage Service.

Both were constructed during the Joseon dynasty, the last one on the Korean Peninsula, and were given the government designation of "treasure," a status given to old buildings, paintings and other cultural assets with

historic and artistic significance and which receive state-level protection and maintenance.

"I went there this morning and found they've been reduced to heaps of ashes," said Doryun, a senior monk who had lived at the temple for more than three years when he was younger. "I feel really empty. Life is transient."

Doryun now works for a Buddhist organization in charge of the temple. He said that monks and Buddhist faithful managed to move the temple's third "treasure," a stone Buddha statue reportedly built in the 8th century, to a safe place. □

Basic driving rules on Aruba: Traffic signs

(Oranjestad)—Safe driving is an important part of any (off) road trip. That is why we want to offer you tips and tricks when it comes to driving on the roads and highways of Aruba. Today, we'll take a look at traffic signs.

Speed limit in certain areas

As mentioned in yesterday's issue, the legal minimum and maximum

speed limit on the island is 50 and 80 km/h respectively. However, there are some areas where it is mandated to drive up to a certain speed. This is always indicated by a circular traffic sign with red border and the number 50 on it. Signs like these are always paired by a similar sign with the number crossed out further down the road. This means that the mandate for this speed is now over; you may in-

crease your velocity. Red borders on traffic sign—whether it's a circle or triangle—usually signal a warning, prohibition or preference.

Besides the "50" sign, you may also encounter a traffic sign that says "bebouwde kom". These can be found in San Nicolas and Oranjestad. Bebouwde kom signs are rectangular and blue, and essentially tell you that you are in a heavily in-

habited area. The maximum speed limit in a bebouwde kom is 50 km/h. Just like the previous pair, bebouwde kom signs are also paired with a similar sign crossed out.

Priority signs

On the main roads of Aruba (not the highways), you may see a yellow, squared sign with a white border. This sign tells you that on this road, you have priority and all other traffic should yield to you. This sign can be seen in Savaneta for example. So, if you are driving on the main road in Savaneta going to San Nicolas, you are driving on a single long road, and other cars that want to get on this main road or cross it, either from an intersection or from a dirt road, must all wait until traffic on the main road is clear. In other words, you do not have to stop for them. This sign too has a counter part that indicates that your priority is over.

Another priority sign you may encounter is a triangle sign with a red border and something that looks like a cross. You'll see this sign in an intersection. The general rule of thumb for crossing an intersection that do not contain traffic lights, roundabouts, sign or arrows on the road, is to always yield for traffic on your right. However, if you encounter this sign on your side of the intersection, you have priority over the other cars, even the one on your right.

However, be careful not to confuse this sign with a similar up-side down triangle, also found on intersections. This sign is a prohibition sign, telling you that you have to stop and give other cars priority. Of course you also have a "stop" sign that mean the same thing. The stop sign is generally used for tricky intersections with minimal view of opposite incoming traffic.

These are some of the basic rules that you would have to know if you decide to drive on the island. These are of course other traffic signs, and we recommend you visit aruba-travelguide.com for an extensive overview of all traffic signs used on Aruba.

Picture credits: aruba-travelguide.com



bebouwde kom



end bebouwde kom



end priority



end speed limit



intersection priority



priority



speed limit



stop sign



triangle stop sign

Food culture in Aruba

(Oranjestad) - Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes,

due to the need of a quick "to-go" breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can are largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the ABC Islands* include sopi di bonchi cora (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), carni stoba

(beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening "meal" can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also served with the evening snack.

(Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from

Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include, bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (dark fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include,

Saco*, basket, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun. □

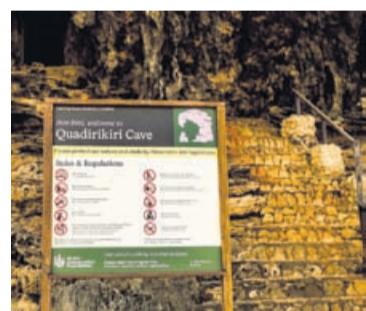
*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

*Saco: Saco literally means "bag". Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba

New rules and regulations signs to enhance your park experience



To ensure a safe and responsible visit, ACF has installed new and improved Rules & Regulations signs at the entrances of Parque Nacional Arikok (PNA) and key Points to Explore, such as Cave Quadirikiri.

These updated signs feature a complete and enhanced set of rules and regulations, along with newly added key messages such as park opening hours and legal violations, reinforcing the protection of our nature-protected area.

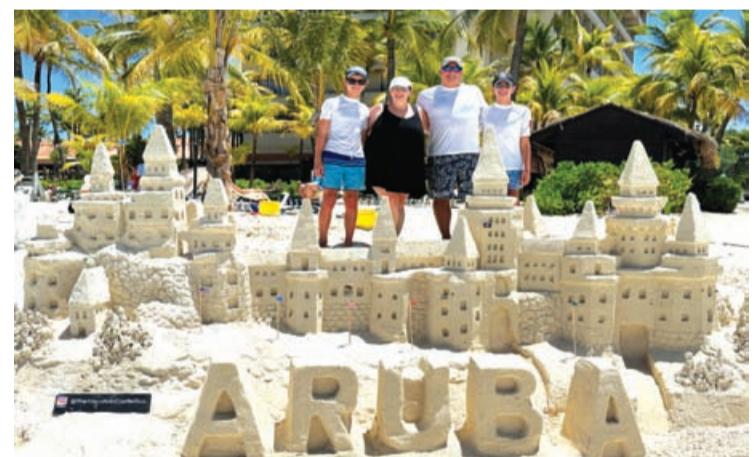
Additionally, all hiking trails leading into the park are now equipped with smaller versions of these signs, providing hikers with clear guidance on responsible behavior before they set off on their hike.

New directional signs, both outside and inside PNA, are currently in development and will be coming soon to help you navigate our national park responsibly—whether by vehicle or on foot! □

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special



way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you

for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Tyler Frost and Family from St. Louis, MO, USA.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is sandcastles."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

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Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard

Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts

Treasure Cove | El Patio Tacos & Tequila | M8 Boutique

Fusion Restaurant, Tapas, Wine & Piano Bar

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Marriott's Aruba Surf Club!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years con-



secutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years
consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador (35>years
consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassadors
Mr. Gary and Mrs. Mary Anne Burrofato from Wayne, New Jersey, United States.

Ms. Keyttin Silva representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Marriott's Aruba Surf Club bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked Mr. and Mrs. Burrofato for choosing

Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's people are very friendly.
- Aruba's great weather.
- Aruba's great restaurants.
- Aruba's clean hotels.
- A very happy island.

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □

Create museum memories

ORANJESTAD — Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you these museums.

Museum of Industry Aruba

The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas—better known as the art capital of Aruba. This museum exhibits the industrial history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history, which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments Fund in 2003 so it can be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum

of Industry is part of Aruba Museum Foundation (Fundacion Museo Aruban), which is a foundation set to maintain, preserve, and protect the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm. For more information, check out their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in the area has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's, AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of

historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

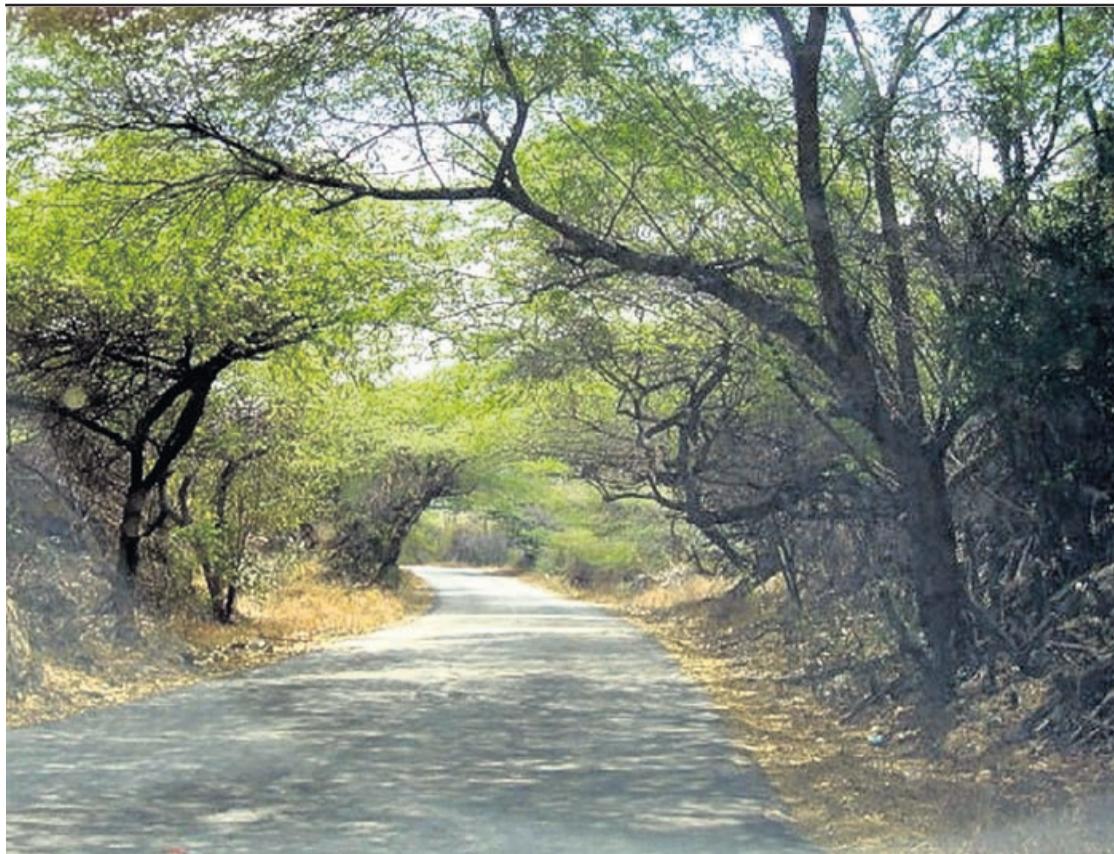
These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1.700 m2.

In 1997, the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004, a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006, restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the soon-to-be exhibition space. In December 2007, the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.



At the new location, the National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit conveys information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum also hosts attractive public programs, including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm. For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. □



(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with

fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves. The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage was known as Frenchman's Pass,

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to hitchhike, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that the there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the

wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his experience. Everyone grew quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass contributes a lot to our culture of folkloric story-telling. □

Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Candelchi!

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Candelchi" (Squirrelfish), a common, yet shy fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, known as Santa Rosa, offers this informative article that

illustrate some fish and their names in Papiamento.

Candelchi, Squirrelfish, *Holocentrus adscensionis*:

Candelchi actually refers to the entire squirrelfish family or, as some say, when we say candelchi, we mean several different species but without distinguishing them by species. In this picture, we are showing the most common one in our waters, which is called squirrelfish in English or scientifically known as *Holocentrus adscensionis*.



Under candelchi, we in Aruba generally refer to all the different species of squirrelfish. They all look alike and it's really difficult to distinguish between them.

The squirrelfish family is distinguished by the following characteristics. They are heart-shaped with pink or red hues and often show heart-shaped streaks between the scales along the body. They have hard

fins and are always armed. Over at our sister island Curaçao, they are called "bari di clabo" (nail barrel) for that reason.

In our waters, there are 7 to 8 types or species present and they are sometimes caught and seen occasionally. They can be distinguished by different marks such as color on the dorsal spine or marks on the body.

In Aruba:

Candelchi are found on reefs or areas with structure in the water where they can hide. Although they prefer to hunt for food at night, they are also active during the day. They are edible and delicious when prepared dry and crispy with lime. It is particularly challenging to scale the fish, which is why it is not one of the favorites among fishermen. They often live in groups. □

In celebration of 200 years of the Aruban gold rush: Get to know the history of the gold industry on Aruba



(Oranjestad)—This year we celebrate a few milestone anniversaries on Aruba, one of them being the 200th anniversary of when gold was first discovered on the island. We have talked about the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruin before and its brief history during the gold industry on Aruba, but get to know a little more about the history of the “Aruban Gold Rush.”

The first hint of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when rumors about gold being found in dug up treasure chests of the Spanish colonial era prompted the first official exploration for gold on the island, commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some specks of gold, it was not enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself. It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young farmer boy named Willem Rasmijn found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep in the area of Rood Fluit on the north coast. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. When the colonial governor in Curacao, Governor Cantz'laar, heard about the news, he sent his adjutant, Capitan van Raders, to start harvesting gold. This was in July 1824. In August of that same year, the governor followed suit to the island, accompanied by high-ranking military officials. When citizens started swarming the area in search for gold, The Netherlands sent more troops to safe guard the gold.

Prominent places where gold was found was in Daimari, Wacobana, Arikok, Rood Fluit, Hadicouradi and later West Punt, where gold ore was found. Because of a lack in advanced technology and materials to harvest the gold, the process took a more primitive approach: Clay rocks containing traces of gold were left to dry in the sun. Then, workers would start chipping the clay away on a large canvas to catch the gold particles that were left behind after the wind blew away the dust from the clay.

In the harvest period of 1824-1825, there was a total of 71,000 kilos collected through commissioned harvesting. Locals themselves reportedly found about 25 pounds worth of gold in the nearby rivers. The following years after that first big harvest, commission work fell off, and in 1828, the director of the goldmines, Johan Gravenhorst, decided to halt harvesting.

Almost 40 years later, the London-based Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was granted concession. The firm built their gold mines on Bushiribana, and in the port of Oranjestad a long road that connected the gold mill to the port. The ores themselves came from Sero Plat en Sero Cristal.

By this point, workers were still using primitive methods to harvest the ores. For example, when someone had to go into the mines, there were no stairs or lifts; the person had to be brought down in a big bucket, with two or more workers holding the bucket by a thick rope above ground. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. reportedly operated until 1899, and right after the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. was established, coincidentally also based in London. This time, the gold mill in Balashi was built, and more mines were dug up all around the island. The gold ores that were found were transported via track engine, locally called the “trekichi”. Despite being more equipped for the job, the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. could not produce any real profit, and so the concession was terminated just eight years later, in 1908.

A local firm, the “Aruba Goud Maatschappij” (Aruba Gold Company) took over the concession, along with all the materials and equipment. In the beginning, the company saw good profit, and for a while, the island's economy depended primarily on the mining and harvesting of gold. But just like its predecessors, the streak of luck for the Aruba Gold Company came to an end when WWI broke out.

The main reason why production stopped this time was reportedly because of a lack in dynamite for extracting the ores from the mines, as well as a lack in raw materials like German cyanide for the refining process. By the time the war ended, the equipment that was left at Balashi were too old to use again. After the war, gold production on the Aruba was left to a standstill.

According to an issue in Aruba Esso News paper in 1953, Henny Eman wanted to start up digging again, this time using independent miners. He argued that there was proof of more gold to be discovered. Plus, hiring independent miners would boost the island's employment rate.

When it was proven that gold was in fact still present, the executive board on the island promised to fund the project only if the gold dug up proved to be valuable. However, nothing else was reported after this, so it could be concluded that there was no real profitable market on the island anymore.

The ruins of the Bushiribana and Balashi Gold Mills are still standing, and open for the public to visit. These structures offer a glance into the past, to a time where Aruba experienced one of its first waves of industrialization. Today, these structures are persevered as historical monuments. □

Source:

1. “De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)” by Evert Bongers.
2. Aruba Esso News, 1953 issue.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 44 Wobble

1 Strip in the Mideast

5 Designer Giorgio

11 Fix copy

12 Be encouraged by

13 Reunion attendee

14 Clue heading

15 Suggestion of a specialist

17 Curry on TV

18 Magnet ends

22 Female deer

24 Long look

25 Strange

26 Hamm of soccer

27 Choose

30 Jar sticker

32 Perry's assistant

33 Mess up

34 Cockiness

38 Warm spot

41 Horned goddess

42 "Measure for Measure" role

43 Glasgow native

TAME	GALAXY
ANON	ONESIE
STUD	TUNE IN
KIT	JIBS
HAITI	SOS
HOHUM	SCOOP
AVON	OUZO
HALTS	MOTET
ALE	QUASH
FUND	PUP
HAWAII	BORE
ALHIRT	ULNA
SPORTS	DESK

45 Sushi tuna

DOWN

1 Equip

2 For two,

in music

3 Red wine

4 Go to

5 Miles off

6 News summaries

7 Red wine

8 Bustle

9 Denials

10 Useful connections

16 Hosp. workers

19 Red wine

20 Huron

21 Barking beast

22 Worked the garden

23 Not busy

28 Red wine

29 Be a fink

30 Floral accessory

31 Gallery star

35 God with a hammer

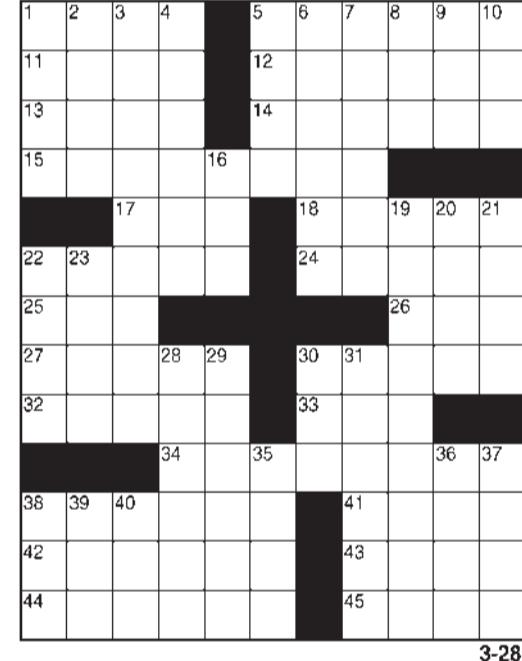
36 French designer

37 "— Perpetua" (Idaho motto)

38 Bowler, e.g.

39 Hydro-carbon suffix

40 Period



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-28 CRYPTOQUOTE

T N L Z H V O I M I M H V N D H J ,

P A D H V O I M I M H J H N , F H I I M H

S M W I M P A R I M H V N I H S J H I

W A E S J A E F R S H H . — Z M S O J I W

N L L P N S I O L H

Cryptoquote: ISN'T IT DELIGHTFUL
TO HAVE FRIENDS COMING FROM AFAR?
— CHINESE PROVERB

Cruise ship Schedule: March 24 - 30 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH
MON	24	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	18.00	C 1
TUE	25	MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	C 1
WED	26	AMERA	08.00	23.00	C 1
		OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	I 1
FRI	28	REGAL PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	C 1
SAT	29	STAR CLIPPER	10.00	19.00	C 1
SUN	30	OCEANIA VISTA	10.00	20.00	C 1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

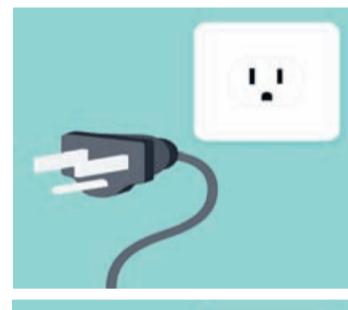
Supermarket hours



(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Electrical power



Drinking water



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

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Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

Classifieds

Divi village Golf
Eagle beach
One bedroom week # 9
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23 weeks remaining
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2 x 1 BR Floating weeks
Platinum level All inclusive
Price :\$10,000 each
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

La Quita beach resort
Eagle beach
Two Bedroom week #12
Room # 2002 /2012
Phase 2
Price :\$10,000
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Marriott surf club
Palm beach
Two bedroom 2 bath
Ocean side
Platinum season
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5 BR 4 bath
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Johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

219042

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DOCTOR ON DUTY

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Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
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San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel.524 8833

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San Nicolas:

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank	
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FAVI- Visually Impaired	
Tel. 582 5051	
Alcoholics Anonymous	
Tel. 736 2952	
Narcotics Anonymous	
Tel. 583 8989	
Fundacion Contra Violencia	
Relacional Tel. 583 5400	
Centre for Diabetes	
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Quota Club Tel. 525 2672	

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Movie Review: Jason Statham takes on the mob in 'A Working Man,' a blue-collar action thriller

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

Jason Statham is cosplaying a construction laborer when "A Working Man" begins. He's making sure the rebar is spaced correctly and the concrete is correctly mixed. But we all know where his real strengths are: Beating up people, ferociously.

Soon enough faster than this one-time springboard diving champion used to hit the water Statham will be doing what he does best in an action movie made by millionaires that hopes to tap into blue-collar chic.

Statham plays a sort of hero-laying-low in director and co-writer David Ayer's latest collab they previously teamed up on "The Beekeeper" with the addition of a co-writer who knows a thing or two about lone-wolf underdogs Sylvester Stallone.

When the 19-year-old daughter of his boss is snatched during a night out with girlfriends in Chicago, they turn to Statham, a former anti-terrorist commando for the UK's Royal Marines, which at least explains the British accent.

But he can't help them he's given up that old life. "I'm a different person now," he says. It's not who I am anymore." Admittedly, he says this shortly after fighting off



This image released by Amazon MGM Studios shows Jason Statham in a scene from "A Working Man."

a gang messing with one of his workers, attacking them with a bucket of nails, an ax and a bag of gravel.

He's a widower and a single father saving up money to fight legally this time for more custody by sleeping in his Ram truck. His in-laws want to limit his visitation, alleging he suffers from PTSD, a very cynical use by the movie-makers of a popcorn flick with a body count north of a hundred. "I hurt, too," he tells his daughter.

A visit to an old military buddy David Harbour,

superb helps change his mind. "God help them," says Harbour's character after the decision is made. He knows what's in store for anyone getting in the way of Statham's oddly named Levon Cade (scramble the letters and you get "Novel Aced," go figure).

So begins Statham's version of "Taken" mixed with a blue-collar version of "John Wick." Our construction worker-turned-vigilante is reassuring to the family of the missing teen. "I'm gonna bring her home. I promise," he vows.

We soon plunge into an underworld of Russian mobsters, designer drugs, human trafficking, corrupt cops and a vicious biker gang run by a guy who sits on a throne of motorcycle parts. People are waterboarded, shot, stabbed, smashed with animal skulls, blown up by grenades and burned with hot coffee.

"All of this is for a girl?" asks one incredulous Russian mob boss, who is hogtied and dangled over his own swimming pool as Statham tortures him while munching on some toast he's

Associated Press

made in his fancy kitchen. Shall we talk about the rich now? The upper-level mobsters wear cravats, bow ties and hold gold-tipped walking sticks. One even wears a cape and uses a cigarette holder, like a sort of Mister Burns from "The Simpsons." The drug dealers wear buffoonish designer duds, "do business" in restaurant banquets and all have attache cases with stacks of banded money, like it's still the '80s. They are all venal, foppish and perverted. The big finale takes place in a tucked-away farm casino with fancy-dressed fat cats. This is in contrast to Statham, an orange safety vest kind of guy with a soldier's moral compass. He at one point throws into the air enough \$100 bills to buy a Lamborghini. But he's not doing it the money, even though he needs it. He's there for the girl.

"A Working Man" fetishizes its blue-collar ethic at a time when extremely wealthy Americans have taken key roles in the second Donald Trump administration and the world's richest man, Elon Musk, is slicing at government jobs (Veterans are increasingly facing the burden.) Trump himself donned an orange vest when he cosplayed a garbage man on the campaign trail. □

Will Smith gets a street named in the Philadelphia neighborhood where he was born and raised



Will Smith holds up a street sign during a ceremony to name a street after him in West Philadelphia on Wednesday, March 26, 2025.

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — In West Philadelphia where he was born and raised, now there's a street called Will Smith Way.

Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle Parker and city leaders honored the Oscar and Grammy winner on Wednesday, renaming a street next to Smith's old high school. "Philly, I love you. I am yours. You are mine," Smith said at a ceremony along a section of 59th Street that now bears his name. He reminisced about learning the values of hard work and education from his mother and father before hitting it big as an actor and rapper.

"Nobody gets an easy ride," he said. "That was one of the things these streets of Philadelphia taught me: that there's nothing wrong with a hard day's work." Among those who came out to see him

was a former teacher who was the first to call him "Prince Charming" a nickname he changed up a bit for the 1990s TV show "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air," in which Smith played a teenager from Philadelphia who goes to live with relatives in Los Angeles.

"The name 'The Fresh Prince' was coined in that building," Smith said, pointing back at Overbrook High School. "I added the 'fresh' because it was hip-hop slang."

Smith will release his fifth studio album "Based on a True Story" on Friday. It's his first music project in two decades since "Lost and Found."

He won Grammys for "Summertime," "Men In Black," "Gettin' Jiggy Wit It" and "Parents Just Don't Understand." He's also starred in the movies "Bad Boys," "Men in Black" and "King Richard." □

There's no easy answers for slowing down rising level of pitching injuries at all levels of baseball

By STEVE MEGARGEE

AP Sports Writer

GOODYEAR, Ariz. (AP) —

Figuring out a cause for the skyrocketing number of arm injuries among pitchers is easy.

Finding a solution could prove much more challenging.

Major League Baseball issued a 62-page report in December that showed how the focus on throwing with increased velocity and using maximum effort on every pitch was a likely reason for the increase in injuries. The study provided numerical data backing a thesis already supported by conventional wisdom.

"It makes sense," Cleveland Guardians right-hander Tanner Bibee said. "You do anything at a max capacity, you're going to be at more risk for injury. If you try to squat your absolute max, you're going to get hurt more often than if you're squatting a plate and a bar. It's just kind of the nature of anything you do in life." The study showed that major league pitcher injured list placements increased from 212 in 2005 to 485 in 2024. Days on the IL rose from 13,666 to 32,257. Tommy John surgeries for major and minor league players increased from 104 in 2010 to a peak of 314 in 2020, though they slipped to 281 last year.

The study recommended "considering rule changes at the professional level that shift the incentives for clubs and pitchers to prioritize health and longevity." Instituting those types of rule changes could prove challenging when pitchers of all ages understand how much MLB organizations are emphasizing velocity.

"I don't know if rules are the right way to go about it," said Chicago Cubs left-hander Matthew Boyd, who underwent Tommy John surgery in 2023. "You can't tell someone to throw softer. But I was a guy in college that threw high 80s. I would randomly throw a hard number, but I didn't know how to do it



Chicago Cubs pitcher Matthew Boyd throws to the Yomiuri Giants in the sixth inning of an MLB Japan Series exhibition baseball game in Tokyo, Japan, Sunday, March 16, 2025.

Associated Press

consistently right. But I got outs. But I knew that some wise people ahead of me told me outs are going to get you to the big leagues, velocity's going to get you drafted. So therein lies the problem."

Perhaps most concerning were the statistics involving younger pitchers.

Prospects who threw 95 mph or higher at the Perfect Game National Showcase for top high school players increased from three in 2018 to 36 in 2024. Thirty-five players selected in the top 10 rounds of last year's amateur draft had Tommy John surgery, up from four in 2005.

The evidence of increasing injuries isn't limited to this study. An Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine study showed there were five times as many injuries among Pac-12 baseball players in 2021 as in 2016, though that applied to all players and not just pitchers.

Problems are starting early in the pipeline

Those numbers help explain why one school of thought suggests any changes need to start at the youth level. That idea has the support of Eric Cressey, who trains more than 100 pro baseball players through his Cressey Sports Perfor-

mance facilities in Florida and Massachusetts.

Cressey also is the New York Yankees' director of player health and performance, but he was speaking only on his own behalf and wasn't representing the Yankees on this issue.

"I've long maintained that everything begins with fixing what's happening at the younger levels, and there will eventually be a trickle-up to the big leagues," Cressey said.

Cressey noted the problems at the youth level by citing the videos he sees of young pitchers with "arms and legs flying everywhere" as they enter throwing programs when their bodies aren't prepared to handle it. He believes that young pitchers throwing max-effort showcases in the off-season and disregarding basic warmup guidance has contributed to significant injuries.

"Thirteen-year-olds should never be blowing out ligaments," Cressey said. "That should just not be happening. And every time it happens, it's because someone made a terrible, terrible decision on that child's behalf, whether it's a coach or a parent. Just like you or I wouldn't let our kids have candy for dinner or run with scissors or some-

ers attempt in the off-season is notable because data shows that more injuries happen at the start of the season or in the pre-season than at any other time of the year. The MLB study released in December showed that over 40% of the injured list placements due to elbow injuries from 2010-24 came in either March or April.

"That is generally because I don't think guys are ramping up correctly," Martinez said.

The challenge with going old school

Guardians pitching coach Carl Willis said he'd like to see an industry-wide emphasis on "turning the clock a little bit to a more old-school and traditional type of way" that relies on locating pitches and changing speeds and shapes. Willis believes that approach could allow pitchers to realize they don't have to go full-throttle every time they release the ball.

"To prevent some of these injuries, that's kind of the direction we have to go," Willis said. "You can't take away the power and the profiles that these guys can create, but you can take a little bit of the pressure off." That pressure can start at the youth levels, which explains why MLB has established Pitch Smart initiatives that set recommended workload limits for pitchers. The idea is to limit the likelihood they would pitch with fatigue since that increases injury risk. The trick is making sure those recommendations get followed, particularly at a time when pitching prospects across the world believe velocity is what's going to make an impression on scouts.

"What's challenging right now is it's hard to close Pandora's box," Cressey said. "A lot of these kids who are 25 and blowing out in the big leagues, they were kids who were doing a lot of things incorrectly in their teenage years, and now they're just bigger, stronger and are in higher-pressure situations." □

Deion Sanders' push for NFL-style intersquad scrimmages at college level gains momentum with coaches

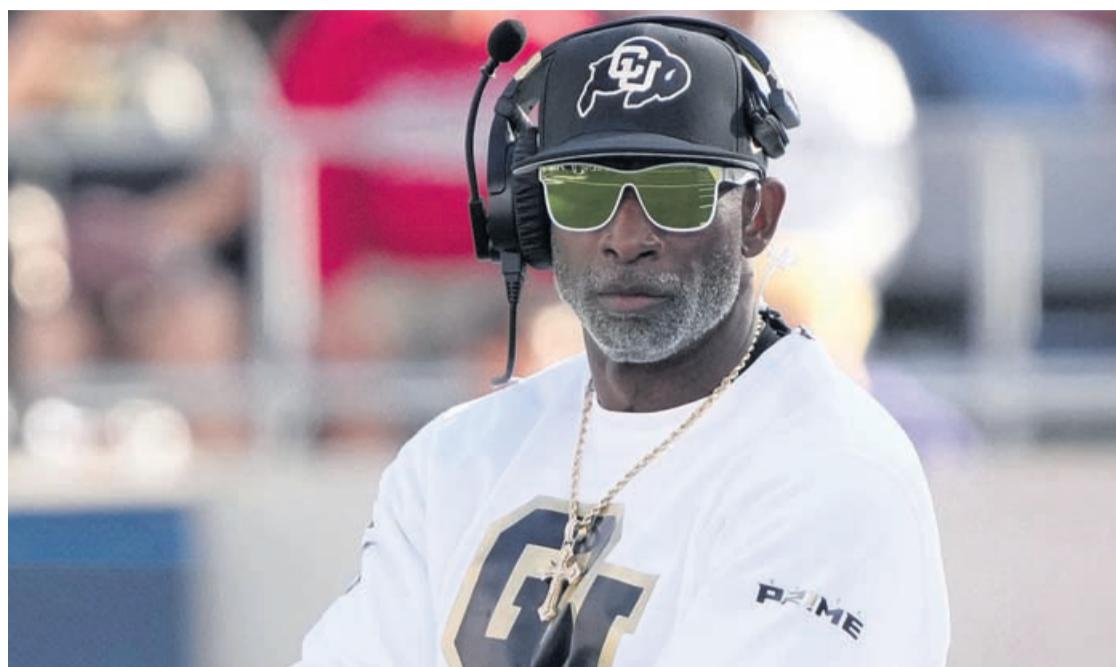
By ERIC OLSON

AP College Football Writer

With Football Bowl Subdivision programs planning for a 105-man roster limit this fall, American Football Coaches Association executive director Craig Bohl said he sees the day coming when the NCAA allows NFL-style intersquad practices and scrimmages.

"If a couple programs choose to explore this, I think it's going to be something that could have some real legs to it," Bohl told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Colorado coach Deion Sanders recently suggested a school be allowed to host a team from another



Colorado head coach Deion Sanders watches during the first half during an NCAA college football game against Arizona, Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024, in Tucson, Ariz.

Associated Press

school for a few days of joint practices before they play an exhibition game, possibly as a replacement for the traditional intra-squad spring game. Syracuse coach Fran Brown, in response to Sanders, said in a social media post he would be willing to take his team to Colorado for a three-day visit.

Asked if Colorado had requested a waiver that would allow for it, CU athletics spokesman Steve Hulbert texted to the AP, "We are working with the NCAA and the Big 12 Conference.

There are currently no updates."

Bohl said "there is quite a bit of appetite" among coaches to hold intersquad practices and scrimmages, even still this spring.

The impetus is the 105-man roster limit, which likely will become official next month with the expected final approval of the House vs. NCAA antitrust lawsuit settlement.

The average FBS roster was 128 players last year, and coaches are looking for ways to mitigate wear and tear on their reduced number of players, Bohl said. Intersquad practices between teams that are from different conferences and won't play each other during the season would help accomplish that.

The issue especially resonates with teams contending for the season-extending College Football Playoff.

One concern, Bohl said, is that participation in intersquad practices would put players on display for personnel directors for the other team, which, in turn, could lead to tampering.

"Do I really want to expose my guys?" Bohl said a coach asked him.

"They're going to have their general manager out there taking notes on what kind of ability a certain player has. How you get that worked out, I don't know." □

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